

House Republican Press Release

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Rep. Farr: Reform Needed to Help Former Inmates Become Productive Citizens



As Connecticut continues to reduce the number of individuals incarcerated in state prisons, the General Assembly must improve pre- and post-release programs to help inmates successfully re-integrate into society and become productive, law-abiding citizens, state Representative Bob Farr, R-19th District, said today.

“Upon release, some former inmates have simply been taken to homeless shelters in their former hometowns and left to fend for themselves. Since most recently-released prisoners end up living in the cities where they grew up and associating with the same people they knew before their original arrests, there is a high probability that many of them will fall back into lives of crime and eventually be imprisoned once again,” said Representative Farr, the House Ranking Member (Republican leader) on the General Assembly’s Judiciary Committee.

“Although reforms to our parole and probation systems that have been put in place over the past few years have enabled us to significantly reduce our prison population, we need to focus our attention on ways to lower the recidivism rate among recently-released prisoners, including pre-release counseling and job training. Our prisons need to become more than just a respite from a life of crime. They should provide the counseling these individuals need to correct self-destructive behavior and help them acquire the skills they need to find jobs and become law-abiding, productive citizens,” said Representative Farr, who joined Judiciary Committee House Chair Michael P. Lawlor, D-99th District, and state Representative William R. Dyson, D-94th District, at a news conference this morning to discuss a conference on criminal justice scheduled for Thursday, January 12th, and Friday, January 13th at Central Connecticut State University in New Britain.

The conference will address the issues of criminal justice policy and practices in Connecticut, with special emphasis on offender re-entry strategy (Public Act 04-234) and the concept of justice reinvestment. The conference is expected to provide useful information and stimulate discussion on topics that are increasingly relevant to Connecticut and other states, the legislators said.

Forum topics include reducing the recidivism rate and lowering the prison population in Connecticut. High recidivism and prison population rates negatively affect not only the

individual, but families, neighborhoods, municipalities and the state as a whole. Because more than 90% of offenders re-enter society, effectively transitioning individuals from conviction and/or incarceration to becoming productive members of society should be a major goal of the criminal justice process, the legislators said.